

While attending Oregon College of Education, OCE, now known as Western Oregon State University, Mr. Azule worked as a family liaison with an American Indian youth program funded by the Indian Education Act. As a family liaison, he tutored and counseled hundreds of American Indian youth, providing career guidance and helping them to explore their career opportunities. Upon graduation from OCE, Mr. Azule joined the Northwest Regional Educational Lab and worked on their Indian Reading Language Development Program. This program has been invaluable in helping American Indian youth keep their indigenous languages alive.

Mr. Azule next established the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's extremely successful Education Department. With his invaluable assistance, the Department now includes Head Start, Youth Education, Higher Education, and Vocational training programs which has served to help the lives of hundreds of tribal members. The Grand Ronde Education Department has become a model of success across the county—much to the tireless efforts of Mr. Azule.

After almost 10 years with the Grand Ronde Tribes, Mr. Azule joined the Salem-Keizer public school system in 1999. Active in community outreach programs, he has helped disadvantaged children continue their education despite facing social and economical hardships at Washington Elementary, Keizer Elementary, and Miller Elementary School. Most recently, he has taken a behavioral health position at the new West Salem High school.

Mr. Azule is a true champion for Oregon's children, and I know he will continue to play a vital role in educating and making a difference in the lives of children in our State. His tireless spirit serves as an inspiration to us all. Today, I am proud to honor Dean Azule as an education hero for our great State of Oregon.●

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT KENNETH HENDRICKSON

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I am saddened to report the passing of SSG Kenneth Hendrickson of Bismarck, ND. Kenneth was killed on January 24, 2004, while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Kenneth, who was called up for active duty last spring, was scheduled to leave Iraq in March. He was one of two North Dakota Army National Guardsmen killed by a roadside bomb while traveling near Fallujah. Kenneth was a member of the Bismarck-based 957th Multi-Role Bridge Company and a 15-year veteran of the National Guard.

Kenneth, a computer technician for Bismarck public schools, was married just 4 days before being deployed. Born in Fargo, Kenneth lived with his family in Bismarck. His father Lyle Hendrickson lives in Rapid City, SD and is a Pennington County commis-

sioner. Kenneth is described by family members as a free spirit who loved children and knew how to have fun. Even while in Iraq, his number one concern was his family back home.

Kenneth and his fellow National Guard members are playing a vital role in Iraq. These brave men and women have taken time away from their family, friends, and jobs to serve their country thousands of miles from home. Kenneth and many other National Guard members have given the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom. Our country owes them a tremendous debt of gratitude for their service.

The lives of countless people were enormously enhanced by Kenneth's goodwill and service. He inspired all those who knew him. Our Nation is a far better place because of his life. The best way to honor him is to emulate his commitment to our country.

I express my sympathies to the family of Kenneth Hendrickson. I know he will always be missed, but his service to our Nation will never be forgotten.●

#### TRIBUTE TO HUMAN RESOURCES COMMAND—ST. LOUIS

● Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I wish to pay special tribute to the U.S. Army's Human Resources Command—St. Louis, formerly known as the Army Personnel Command, AR-PERSCOMD. On October 2, 2003, ARPERSCOM was deactivated and merged with the U.S. Army's Total Army Personnel Command to form the Army's Human Resources Command, headquartered in Alexandria, VA. Although its name has changed, the organization's proud legacy of selfless service to Army Reserve Soldiers, veterans, and their family members continues.

The mission of Human Resources Command—St. Louis, HRC—St. Louis, is to ensure the full spectrum of human resources programs, services and systems are executed to support the readiness and well-being of Army personnel worldwide. HRC—St. Louis and its predecessor organizations have a long and distinguished history of service to the Nation. Located in the Charles F. Prevedel Building at the Federal Records Complex in suburban St. Louis, the command was officially activated on October 1, 1998, with the mission of providing the highest quality life cycle management and services resulting in a trained and ready force in support of the National Military Strategy. Formed provisionally on October 16, 1997, AP-PERSCOM replaced the former U.S. Army Reserve, USAR, Personnel Center on ARPERCEN.

HRC—St. Louis traces its lineage back to 1919, when the Demobilized Records Division was established in Washington, D.C., as an activity under the Adjutant General's Office. Its mission was to store and maintain the records of soldiers demobilized after World War I. After a number of moves, the division came to St. Louis in 1945. First located at the Federal facility at

4300 Goodfellow Blvd., the division moved to its present location on 9700 Page Avenue—1 Reserve Way—in 1956. Through the years, the organization underwent a number of name and mission changes, including the establishment of the Reserve Components Personnel and Administration Center or RCPAC in 1971, and ARPERCEN's establishment as a field operating agency under the Chief, Army Reserve in 1984. In 1994, a U.S. Army council of colonels convened and determined that USAR personnel management, service and policy functions should be streamlined and consolidated under one command: AR-PERSCON.

Serving as the single focal point for the supporting Army Reserve Personnel life cycle management in peacetime, mobilization, and demobilization environments, HRC—St. Louis provides efficient and seamless human resource support to Army Reserve Soldiers who are Troop Program Unit, TPU, members, drilling Reserve unit members; Individual Mobilization Augmentees, IMA; Individual Ready Reservists, IRR; and Active Guard Reserve, AGR soldiers, reservists on extended full-time active duty. The command supports almost 329,000 Ready Reserve Soldiers, approximately 212,000 in the Selected Reserve—TPU, IMA, and AGR, and over 115,000 IRR Soldiers.

HRC—St. Louis is a highly innovative organization; maximizing the talents of its combined military and civilian work force over 1,100 members. It serves as a leader within the Department of Defense in maximizing use of advanced technology providing personalized, e-care—electronic—to customers. Its award-winning HRC—St. Louis, formerly 2xCitizen, website, with its numerous applications, informs Reserve soldiers and the public on Army personnel matters. In 2002, alone, there were over 28 million visits—logins—to the website. Soldiers can access and update their records online at any time via the Internet through their own individual self-service web portal—a significant innovation and major evolution in soldier personnel service support. No longer do Reserve soldiers have to wait extended periods for hardcopy documents or microfiche copies to arrive through the mail to review their records or prepare for promotion boards. In providing responsive, real time e-care for soldiers, HRC—St. Louis contributes significantly toward the Army's readiness to engage in support of the implementation of the National Military Strategy on behalf of the Nation's security objectives.

The command's merger with the Total Army's PERSCOM, and incorporation as part of the new U.S. Army's Human Resources Command, is part of an overall Army transformation effort to streamline and enhance integration of all personnel functions—making them more efficient and responsive in meeting a wide range of missions—while enhancing personnel service for the soldier.